

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 153
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AMDONSUL MONTREAL IMMEDIATE 05
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 0635

FOR ARA/CCA, CA/SCS

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: CASC CGEN ASEC PINS CU
SUBJ: AMERICAN FUGITIVES IN CUBA

REF: HAVANA 625

1. AIR CANADA FLIGHT DEPARTED HAVANA WITHOUT FUGITIVES SINCE CABIN CREW UNWILLING ACCEPT THEM ON BOARD. AIR CANADA CHIEF OF SECURITY AND THREE OTHER SECURITY PERSONNEL ARRIVED HAVANA ON INCOMING FLIGHT. CAPTAIN, CO-PILOT, AND RADIO OPERATOR ALSO HAD BEEN BRIEFED IN CANADA ON ANTICIPATED TRANSPORT OF REF GROUP ON RETURN FLIGHT. CABIN CREW HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED PRIOR ARRIVAL HAVANA, AND WHEN INFORMED, OBJECTD.

2. ALTHOUGH BOTH CAPTAIN AND SECURITY CHIEF TRIED PERSUADE CABIN CREW TO ACCEPT GROUP, THEY UNWILLING TO INSIST. ONE FACTOR IN DECISION WAS PRESENCE ON FLIGHT OF ABOUT ONE DOZEN CANADIAN JOURNALISTS WHO HAD POTENTIAL FOR GENERATING CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY. ALSO, ACCORDING TO SECURITY CHIEF, NORMAL DEPLOYMENT IS TWO SECURITY PERSONNEL FOR EACH POTENTIAL
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PROBLEM CASE. GIVEN ONLY 4 TO 6 ODDS HE RELUCTANT TO PRESSURE CREW.

3. REF GROUP RETURNED BY CUBAN AUTHORITIEE TO IMMIGRATION HOUSE. ACCORDING TO CAPTAIN DE LA TORRE OF IMMIGRATION, GOC WILLING LET GROUP LEAVE ON CUBANA FLIGHT TO MONTREAL TOMORROW, MARCH 10. USINT HAS CONFIRMED

RESERVATIONS FOR ALL SIX FUGITIVES ON CUBANA FLIGHT 480
LEAVING HAVANA 1500 HOURS, SCHEDULED ARRIVE MONTREAL 1900
HOURS. REQUEST DEPT CONFIRM CANADIAN GOVERNMENT WILLING-
NESS PERMIT ENTRANCE AND TRANSIT ALL SIX FUGITIVES.
REQUEST REPLY BY NIACT IMMEDIATE.

4. DEPARTMENT SHOULD ANTICIPATE PRESS QUERIES ON THESE
DEVELOPMENTS. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE PROTECT GOC CONFI-
DENCE AND ITS INSISTENCE THAT IT NOT BE LINKED TO ANY
SUPPOSED DEAL WITH USG FOR RETURN OF THESE FUGITIVES TO
US. IF ASKED, WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT HIJACKERS WERE
LEAVING VOLUNTARILY, THAT GOC DID NOTHING MORE THAN
AUTHORIZE THEIR DEPARTURE TO A THIRD COUNTRY WITH
APPROPRIATE US DOCUMENTATION. ALL SUBSEQUENT ARRANGEMENTS
WERE MADE DIRECTLY BETWEEN USG AND CANADIANS WITHOUT
KNOWLEDGE OF GOC.
LANE

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